(a) whether the Government of Kerala has requested to declare M.C. Road in Kerala as a National Highway; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. During Seventh Five Year Plan, the Government of Kerala had projected this road for inclusion in the National Highway grid. However, due to financial stringency and other oriority considerations, it has not possible to declare this road as a National Highway.

Alleged Misbehaviour with Bunk Passengers at Madras

4784. SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any complaints about the harassment to bunk class passengers at Madras at the time of obtaining bunk tickets for travel from Madras to Port Blair by Government-run ships during the last one year;

(b) if so, whether the Government have any enquires into such complaints;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken by the Government to ensure that the security-guards on duty at Madras do not misbehave with the bunk passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The harassment to bunk class passengers in getting tickets at Madras was due to certain deficiencies in the earlier ticketing procedure. The Andaman and Nicobar Administration has streamlined the procedure with effect from 1-9-1991. As per the revised procedure, the Deputy Resident Commissioner of A&N Administration at Madras finalises the complete list of the Administration's quota and forwards the same to the Office of the Shipping Corporation of India at Madras for ticketing. M/s RITES have also undertaken a project for improving and computerising the entire procedure of reservation and ticketing. With the ongoing implementation of their recommendations for streamlining the systems, it is expected that the harassment and hardships to the passengers will get eliminated.

(d) The security guards provided at Madras are employees of an outside agency to whom the security contract has been awarded. The Officer of Shipping Corporation of India Ltd. at Madras is maintaining a strict vigil on the conduct of the security guards. A proper public grievance handling system has been provided by the Madras Office of SCI. Any compliant received from the passengers is attended to immediately.

Financial Assistance to SCs/STs for Establishing Gas Agencies and Petrol Pumps

4785. SHRI M.G. REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any financial assistance is provided to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for establishing petrol pumps and L.P.G. agencies; and

(b) if so, the number of such SC/ST beneficiaries at present, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR